

Keeping it Clean



As our community grows, so must its commitment to protecting and improving the quality of our water resources. Assets such as Silver Lake and the Zumbro River help make Rochester one of the nation's most livable communities. Keeping our water resources clean and usable is in everyone's interest.

StormWater
MANAGEMENT

Managing Rochester's Storm Water

STORM WATER RUNOFF: MORE THAN JUST RAIN AND SNOW

Rochester receives an average of 33 inches of rain and 44 inches of snow each year. Rain or snowmelt that falls on buildings, streets, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces cannot soak into the ground. Storm water, as it travels across these hard surfaces, collects dirt, debris, and chemicals that are carried directly into our lakes, streams, and rivers without treatment. Polluted storm water can harm people, aquatic plants, and animals.

FROM THE SKY TO THE RIVER

A vast storm water management system has been built in Rochester to collect and transport storm water away from neighborhoods and businesses and into the Zumbro River as quickly and efficiently as possible. Rochester currently maintains approximately:

- 280 miles of storm sewer pipe,
- 6,200 storm sewer catch basins,
- 2,500 storm sewer manholes,
- 20 bridges and box culverts,
- 130 storm water ponds, plus
- Many outfalls, culverts and miles of open road ditches.

These constructed storm sewer system elements collect and carry storm water into natural water bodies, including: Silver Lake, the emerging Cascade Lake, 12 miles of the Zumbro River and 53 miles of its tributary creeks.

PROTECTING AND IMPROVING ROCHESTER'S STORM WATER QUALITY

The City already conducts many activities to minimize storm water pollution, including:

- Planning for storm water management with the assistance of citizen input,
- Sweeping streets to remove sand, debris and other pollutants,
- Stabilizing creeks and other drainage ways,
- Constructing storm water ponds for water quality control, and
- Requiring grading and drainage plans for all new development to minimize erosion and sediment loss.

As Rochester continues to grow, storm water management will require much more effort. The City must expand its focus from flood control and storm water collection and conveyance to improving water quality.

FEDERAL AND STATE STORM WATER REQUIREMENTS

The Federal Environmental Protection Agency passed regulations that now require Rochester, and many other cities, to more aggressively prevent storm water pollution and control runoff to improve water quality. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency manages the storm water permit program that requires Rochester to significantly expand its storm water management program. The permit requires Rochester to:

- Provide information to residents and businesses about pollution prevention and seek public input on storm water management planning,
- Construct retention and drainage systems to control the quantity and quality of storm water runoff,
- Detect and eliminate prohibited discharges to the storm water system,
- Control sediment loss on construction sites of one or more acres,
- Map the entire storm water system,
- Update and enforce storm water ordinances, and
- Reduce pollutant runoff from all City facilities and operations.

The storm water permit requirements must be met in order for Rochester to legally discharge storm water to lakes and streams. The permit requirements are consistent with Rochester's long-standing commitment to maintain and improve the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of its water resources.

KEEPING IT CLEAN IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

We can all do our part to protect our water resources.

At Home:

- Never dump anything in storm drains,
- Keep grass clippings, leaves, and lawn chemicals off paved surfaces,
- Apply pesticides and fertilizers at the correct rate and time,
- Minimize detergent pollution by using a commercial car wash,
- Repair auto leaks,
- Direct downspouts away from hard surfaces, collect rainwater in a rain barrel for garden use, or install a rain garden, and
- Minimize impervious surface areas.

At Work:

- Sweep and collect litter and debris from parking lots,
- Cover dumpsters, and
- Prepare control and containment plans to manage chemical spills and practice spill response procedures.

At Construction Sites:

- Prevent erosion by minimizing the amount of disturbed area exposed at one time,
- Divert storm water away from disturbed areas, and
- Install and maintain adequate erosion control tools such as silt fences and vegetative cover.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Review information posted on the Storm Water Web Site:

www.rochestermn.gov/stormwater. Questions can be directed to the Customer Service Representatives at Rochester Public Utilities (RPU). Call RPU at 507- 280 - 1500 or send an e-mail to webrequests@rpu.org.